

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Claims 1-11 and 13-20 are now present in the application. Claims 1, 6, 19 and 20 have been amended. Claim 12 has been cancelled. Claim 1 is independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Drawings

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has accepted the formal drawings.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. §119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 20, 2006, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 forms filed therewith.

Objections to the Claims

The Examiner objected to claims 6, 19 and 20 based on minor informalities. In response to the Examiner's objection, claims 6, 19 and 20 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner to overcome the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As set forth above, the limitations of objected-to claim 12 have been added into independent claim 1, and therefore independent claim 1 should be in condition for allowance.

Favorable consideration and early allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7, 13-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Faisant, U.S. Patent No. 6,105,746. Claims 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Faisant in view of Ledingham, U.S. Patent No. 6,516,933. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejections is set forth in the Office Action, and is not repeated herein.

Without conceding to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the application, as the Examiner will note, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of objected-to claim 12, which renders the Examiner's rejection regarding claim 1 moot.

In addition, claims 2-11 and 13-20 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, and are therefore allowable based on their respective dependence from independent claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

In view of the above amendments to the claims and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-11 and 13-20 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

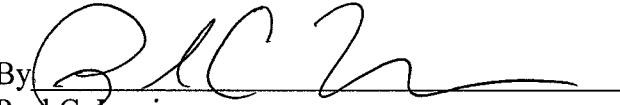
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Paul C. Lewis, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.147; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By


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